DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY F Schneider DATE 7/2/85
XDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S) F-16 Vs F-15
E. DURSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

(75)
R C-23

Q: How good is the F-16 compared to the F-15?

A: They are advanced fighters. The F-15 is superior in air-to-air, while the F-16's air-to-ground capability is superior.

Role of F-5s
Saudi Arabia vs. Egypt

Q: The State Department says that the Saudis use their F-5s primarily for air-to-ground missions. Why won't the Egyptians use the plane for the same role?

A: Most combat aircraft have a dual air-to-air and air-to-ground capability. How an aircraft is used by an air force depends on the other planes in its inventory, the specific mission assigned and the configuration of weapons systems.

The Saudis purchased the F-5 primarily for a close-in ground support role to complement their air defense Lightning fighters.

To enchance the Saudi F-5 ground support capability, the aircraft was modified to carry the Maverick air-to-ground missile and Laser Guided Bombs -- munitions not normally carried on F-5s in other air forces.

There are no plans to modify the Egyptian F-5s for Maverick or Laser Guided Bombs. The Egyptians will use the plane primarily as an air defense fighter.

Egyptian and Saudi Aircraft for Africa

Q: Couldn't the Saudi-Egyptian aircraft be used in Somalia or Chad?

A: The planes could not be operationally supported from bases in Somalia without a major provisioning effort -- to include ground support equipment, munitions, spare parts, and trained personnel.

In addition, under US law. Egypt and Saudi Arabia would not be authorized to transfer equipment without our consent. Neither country would be authorized to use in combat the equipment for purposes inconsistent with its sales agreement with the United States. We have had no requests from either Saudi Arabia or Egypt for use of US equipment in Africa.